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ENG 2011G-011: Literature, the Self, and the World: Fiction

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2011G 011

Literature, the Self, and the World: Fiction
English 2011—Summer, 2004

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Instructor's e-dress: cftde@eiu.edu

Phone: 581-6316
Office hours: 12:30-1:30, MW and
by appointment

Written Texts:

The Catcher in the Rye, J. D. Salinger (1951)
Girl, Interrupted, Susanna Kaysen (1993)
The Bluest Eye, Toni Morrison (1970)
Important Things That Don't Matter, David Amsden (2003)
Art Spiegelman, *Maus* (volumes I and II, 1986, 1991)

Cinematic Texts (all available on three-hour reserve for viewing in the Booth Library):

Rebel without a Cause (directed by Nicholas Ray, 1955)
The Smell of Burning Ants (Jay Rosenblatt, 1994)
Two Lies (directed by Pam Tom, 1990)
Killing Us Softly III (narrated by Jean Kilbourne, 1999)
Nobody's Business (directed by Alan Berliner, 1996)

COURSE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

The job of young people is not, as we sometimes assume, to go to high school. It is to imagine and begin to construct their lives. They need to understand both their own interests and abilities and the society of which they are a part. And they need to make a self that makes sense for the times in which they live. This isn't easy. -Thomas Hines

Bildungsroman: A novel that recounts the development (psychological and sometimes spiritual) of an individual from childhood to maturity, to the point at which the protagonist recognizes his or her place in the world. -Ross Murfin

**(read the following carefully! these words constitute our contract,
and I will request your written agreement to them)**

COURSE OBJECTIVES AND GOALS: A primary goal of this course is to enhance your skills in the art of textual analysis, a skill that any university student should fully develop. We will read, discuss, and write about works that foreground issues of growing up and coming to understand (or misunderstand) "the world." We will consider literature and film as both shaping and reflecting forces, asking how they seem to reflect artistic intentions and social values, and whether they help to shape social values and beliefs. We will take a sociological/

anthropological approach to our material, considering along the way such relevant factors as race, class, gender, and sexuality, and how these factors play out differently in different societal contexts. Issues and ideas that many consider touchy and off limits will arise in our readings and discussions, so you will need to approach this course and its material with an open mind and a willingness to seriously consider viewpoints expressed from different perspectives. This course will require dedicated daily work (reading and talking), quizzes (meant to be easy if you do the reading), a formal essay, and two examinations.

Finally, note that some of the works we'll study contain a good deal of "bad" language, controversial themes, and strong sexual content. If for any reason you strongly object to such material or otherwise find it upsetting, you should consider taking another course. If you decide to stay, do your best to maintain an open mind, to reconsider where your own values and judgments are coming from, and to understand as fully as you can the circumstances of others before judging them.

REGARDING READING: Again, a primary purpose of this course is to help you develop your skills in the art of textual analysis. Consequently, you must give the readings more than a quick skimming over. Instead of wolfing them down right before class, set aside enough time to read carefully—decide for yourself, before coming to class, what each author is trying to describe and bring to light. Also, to ensure that your final grade reflects your reading effort, I will give frequent "pop" quizzes at the beginning of class on required readings. These quizzes will not be announced and they cannot be made up.

GRADES: Your final course grade will be determined in the following way:

Exam 1	25%
Final exam	30%
Formal essay (5-6 pages)	25%
Participation/quizzes/attendance	20%

REGARDING WRITING: When the formal essay is turned in, it MUST be accompanied by all notes and drafts written towards it, with the final copy of the essay on top of this material. I will use these materials to gauge and offer comments on your writing process. I WILL NOT GRADE an essay that is not accompanied by material that clearly demonstrates several earlier stages leading up to the final draft, so be sure to save all such materials (if you do most or all of your writing on a computer, print out occasional drafts to include with your final copy). Essays unaccompanied by materials that clearly demonstrate several stages of development toward the final copy will receive an automatic ZERO. Papers are due at the beginning of class on the due date whether the student is in class or not (it's okay to turn in papers earlier). Late papers will be penalized fifteen points each day they are late. Finally, be mindful of the dire consequences of plagiarism, as described below.

ATTENDANCE POLICY: I will take attendance, and I expect you to attend class every day, on time, and prepared to discuss the material listed for that day on the "daily schedule." More than two missed classes will lower your class participation grade (which is 20% of your final grade) to an F. Missing class frequently will also harm your grade on the reading quizzes. Also, coming to class "prepared" means coming to class with that day's assigned reading—anyone who does not have a copy of the day's assigned reading with them will be considered absent.

Regarding tardiness: this is a small class, so late arrivals are disruptive—if for some bizarre reason you wish to get on my bad side, you can easily do so by developing the habit of arriving late for class. If you will not be able to arrive for this class on time because of other commitments, drop it and take another course. Finally, you are responsible for all assignments, whether you attend class or not. Exchange phone numbers with one or two other students in class, or get in touch with me, so you can find out about missed assignments before you come to class.

MISSED QUIZZES AND LATE PAPERS: Again, because the answers to unannounced quizzes come up in class after they are taken, quizzes cannot be made up (even if you come to class late). These quizzes are one way to reward those who attend class regularly and on time. At the end of the semester, the average grade on these quizzes will constitute a major portion of your class participation grade (I will drop your lowest quiz score before figuring the average grade). Again, papers are due at the beginning of class on the due date whether the student is in class or not. Late papers will be penalized fifteen points each day they are late.

ACADEMIC HONESTY: I expect you to act honestly and do your own work in this class, and so does Eastern Illinois University. It is your responsibility to familiarize yourself with the English Department's policy on plagiarism: "Any teacher who discovers an act of plagiarism—'The appropriation or imitation of the language, ideas, and/or thoughts of another author, and representation of them as one's original work' (Random House Dictionary of the English Language)—has the right and the responsibility to impose upon the guilty student an appropriate penalty, up to and including immediate assignment of a grade of F for the course, and to report the incident to the Judicial Affairs Office."

CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT: In class, I expect all of you to participate in discussions (class participation will be figured into your final grade). **BE SURE** to bring the day's reading assignment with you, and be ready to talk about it. The best way to do well in this course and to demonstrate that you are an active, interested reader is by contributing regularly to class discussions, and by paying close, respectful attention to what everyone else has to say. Many sensitive issues tend to arise within a course of this sort, so we must respect the opinions of others—at times it will help to respond to ideas rather than to the person stating them. If you have questions, no matter how simple or complicated, go ahead and ask me, either in class or via e-mail—chances are that other people have the same question. I do not plan to lecture in this class; I want us to contribute together to a positive, challenging, interesting learning environment. (Also, please do not chew gum or eat food during class, activities which can be distracting to others--drinking beverages is okay. Finally, no caps, please, as they're anti-social in a classroom setting. If you must wear one, turn it backwards so we can see your eyes.)

ENGLISH 2011: DAILY SCHEDULE
(this schedule may be subject to change)

M JUNE 14 Introduction to the course

- In-class film-screening: *Rebel without a Cause* (1955)

T JUNE 15 J. D. Salinger, *Catcher in the Rye* (1951)

W JUNE 16 *Catcher in the Rye*

- In-class film-screening: *The Smell of Burning Ants* (Jay Rosenblatt, 1994)

R JUNE 17 *Catcher in the Rye*

- 5 p.m.: deadline for sending an e-mail message to Dr. Engles (cftde@eiu.edu) that (1) describes yourself in whatever ways you choose as an introduction to yourself, and also (2) includes a statement to the effect that you have read and agree with the above course policies and procedures. BE SURE to include your name in your message.

F JUNE 18 Susanna Kaysen, *Girl, Interrupted* (1993)

M JUNE 21 *Girl, Interrupted*

- Handout in class: Lois-Ann Yamanaka, "When Asian Eyes Are Smiling" (1997)
- In-class film screening: Pam Tom, *Two Lies* (1990)

T JUNE 22 Toni Morrison, *The Bluest Eye* (1970)

W JUNE 23 *The Bluest Eye*

- In-class film screening: *Killing Us Softly III* (Jean Kilbourne, 1999)

R JUNE 24 *The Bluest Eye*

F JUNE 25 **Exam One**

M JUNE 28 David Amsden, *Important Things That Don't Matter* (2003)

T JUNE 29 *Important Things That Don't Matter*

- ALSO! read handout received on Monday: "What Is Good Writing?" "The Writing Process" and subsequent sections, **and** sample student essay
- Before class, write briefly about two particularly strong qualities of the sample student essay; what did this writer do especially well?

W JUNE 30 *Important Things That Don't Matter*

- In-class film screening: *Nobody's Business* (directed by Alan Berliner, 1994)

R JULY 1 Art Spiegelman, *Maus* (1978-91)

F JULY 2 *Maus*

M JULY 5 NO CLASS

T JULY 6 *Maus*

W JULY 7 *Maus*

- Formal essay due at the beginning of class, in a folder, along with all notes and earlier drafts

T JULY 8 Last day of class

- **Final Exam**
- tearful, heartfelt farewells, etc.